Christ and the apostles stand or fall with Moses and the prophets

by

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CHAPTER I.

THE CASE STATED.

Unitarians, Universalists and Infidels are shouting on the work of the "Higher Critics." Infidels seem to be taking a complacent rest, apparently imagining that men better located for their work are doing it more efficiently. Men within the camp, solemnly set apart for the defense of the Gospel, set themselves apart, let us hope unwittingly, for its destruction.

The latest phases of incipient infidelity are wrought out by our mortar-board masters of what President Patton calls, "Rip and Tear Theology." These men, departing from the faith and from their covenant vows, make the Genesis of the Bible the Genesis of their destructive work, turning the intellect of the natural man loose on divine Revelation.

Next in rank we have conceited and popular pulpiteers, exploiting these pleasing and seductive errors. With a prudent regard for "the Seven Great Principles"—the Five Loaves and the Two Fishes, they employ expert finesse, half revealing and half concealing. Their sermons contain some good ethics but a

poverty of Gospel truth, and their congregations decline in evangelical faith and spiritual life.

We now have, following in their train, teachers of Men's Bible Classes, retailing these skeptical theories which were fairly and frequently answered in the days of Voltaire, Hume and Paine. Some sincere young men are amazed, confused and confounded by this treatment of the oracles of God, and some who are underdone, think that men who can thus handle the Bible must know everything. Thus the work goes down from the scholastic expert to the bungling imitator.

We are told that "we must unload the legendary absurdities, unscientific statements and supernatural incidents of the Old Testament before intelligent men will believe it, and hold the later revelation of the New Testament, especially the teachings of Jesus."

Where will this destructive criticism lead? Will not consistent logic and progressive courage drive the plowshare through the whole Book?

Personally and socially most of these men are amiable, and while we must "rebuke them sharply," we must also pray for them kindly with divine compassion. Some of them have returned to the true faith, but our chief hope is in counteracting their destructive influence on sincere disciples who are drifting away from the faith.

They make God's word a patchwork, a polychrome, a babel, a composit of divine folly and human credulity, and the most of those who begin this destructive work, progress rapidly in it toward the end of Revelation.

Naturalism has its root in estrangement from God

and rationalism, and it reasons out the supernatural. Broad-minded reasoning is the vogue of the Broad Way. These men may be intellectual giants, but they are spiritual degenerates. They make light of creeds, but Christ testifies that life and death are joined to belief and unbelief. If error is harmless, truth is worthless.

They may claim to be constructive, but their work tears down and their architecture is like the sky parlors of Fairyland. They expect to destroy the mole sin by destroying the cave ignorance.

They exalt the "Magnificent Manhood of Christ," and hold up the exalted "Object Lesson" of His Life. They are eloquent on Sociology and on the "Rise and Progress" of the race. They beam with optimism like those Oriental "darlings of the morning." They have a smart contempt for "old fogies" and "belated Puritans." They glory in the gospel of modern culture, and advanced civilization.

When culture, like Mary, sits humbly at the feet of the Master, God blesses culture; but when she becomes the harlot of infidelity, let her be Anathama Maranatha. Divine truth must be spiritually discerned. The Gospel makes more of the blood of Christ than the brains of man. God says in Ps. 119: 13, "I hate vain thoughts." Thank God, we have many devout and masterly students of the Word who match and overmatch these scholars.

In general, what is new in "Higher Criticism" is not true and what is true is not new. We make progress by adding new truth without destroying the old. Truth has no tenses. They believe in all sorts of "progress," and seem to be lured by the motto: "Any-

where, Lord, provided it be forward." They use some Scripture phraseology, and having a liberal conscience, as well as a liberal belief, they sometimes preach an orthodox sermon to quiet "the old fogy element."

They pass lightly over the great Gospel themes of Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration. They do not emphasize the fundamental fact that the Old Creation is a moral ruin, and the remedy is not natural evolution, but a New Creation. They repudiate the orthodox hell with the double logic, that God is too good to damn man and man is too good to be damned. They are sky-high optimists, building air castles like the resplendant halls of Valhalla. The natural progress of the race is to bring in a Paradise superior to the one that Adam lost. Their geese are swans and their sparrows are eagles. They love freedom from the tyranny of antiquated dogma, and they are not hampered by humility.

They tell us of the divine element in human nature, exalt Christ as the model man, and hope in development. Such theories, that dishonor Christ and exalt man, logically head up in Antichrist. They seem to esteem any man as about right who calls God his Father and all mankind his brothers.

The common Fatherhood of God and Universal Brotherhood of Man ignores the Fall and the necessity of a new birth. It exalts the natural man to assume a character and standing that he does not possess. Neither the Old nor the New Testament teaches it.

These "Higher Critics" on the Word of God are generally "Lower Critics" on popular worldliness. They are very liberal towards the world. They easily become worldly to catch worldlings. They magnify

the love and mercy of God and minify his holiness and justice. They feed with husks people who are perishing with hunger. Sometimes they come out into the open and disclose God and Bible dishonoring heresies, presuming on the ignorance or charity of the people.

Churches that receive their evolutionary Sociology will go out of the "Great Commission Business" and lapse into a confederacy of clubs and trumpery societies called an "Institutional Church," house-keeping with the world.

These men of false science, false logic and false theology are "up-to-date" in the fulfillment of the Prophecies of the "last days" of the dispensation.

We do not engage in "a strife of tongues" or "a squabble over trifles," but we contend about essential differences, far greater than any between evangelical denominations. We proclaim a grand Redemption, founded on a tragedy of divine blood, as the only hope of lost men.

It is unfair to look up to the "Higher Critics" and look down upon infidels.

In general, as has been repeatedly shown, "Higher Criticism" is the ghost of Paine, masquerading in academic mortar-board and priestly gown, and Infidelity is its guardian Angel.

Honesty and consistency would lead every so-called "Higher Critic" to throw off the mask and peacefully leave the orthodox church.

CHAPTER II.

HIGHER CRITICISM DISPROVED BY THE BIBLE.

Christ and the Apostles stand or fall with Moses and the Prophets.

The Bible of Christ and the Apostles was the Jewish canon, scrupulously preserved, firmly believed, and always honored by Christ and the Apostles. Moses was a type of Christ, and he would no sooner write myths and legends for truth than Christ would. We believe both on infallible proofs. Acts 3: 22. Type and antitype fit like hand and glove.

One and the same God is the author of both Testaments. They interpret each other and stand or fall together. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. The Old Testament is the New enfolded, and the New is the Old unfolded.

We do not substitute slender inferences and speculative conjectures for infallible evidences, making a reconstructed and a fictitious Bible. Agnosticism is the only true goal of this progressive criticism. Its trend is toward the rejection of the supernatural and all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Christ and the Apostles in the heavenlies, outrank the critics in our unsanctified halls of learning.

The human element in Scriptures does not impair the infallibility of divine inspiration, nor justify lawless exegesis.

Christianity itself stands or falls with these Old and New Testament Witnesses united. If the truthfulness and authority of the one is false, that of the other is just as certainly so, and our faith and hope are vain. Moses made mistakes, Christ did also. Are not these critics more likely to be mistaken than they?

The Bereans tested preachers by the Old Testament Scriptures. Acts 7: 11.

Let us first hear a word of Jesus Christ spoken to the Jews: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me." John 5: 46. He would therefore as certainly say to the destructive critics today: "Had ye believed Me, ye would have believed Moses." Is this not as clear as a demonstration in Euclid? Ought not this alone to be sufficient?

The New Testament contains more than three hundred direct quotations from the Old, and over five hundred allusions. Christ quotes sixty times from the Pentateuch. Christ and the Apostles certify many parts of Moses and the Prophets, and point out no mistakes in them. The Bible is "God-breathed," with a unique inspiration, heaven high above that of Shakespeare.

Here are a few of many events of the Old Testament, quoted and sanctioned in the New: Creation, the Flood, Abel, Enoch, the Calling and Career of Abraham, Sodom and Lot's Wife, Cain and Abel, Bondage and Miracles in Egypt, Passage of the Red Sea, Giving of the Law, the Manna, the Brazen Serpent, Samson, the Den of Lions, and the Fiery Furnace. Read Hebrews 11th for a catalogue of godly heroes and miraculous events found in the Old Testament.

It is a significant fact that no utterance nor recorded event of the Old Testament is discredited in the New. Certainly Christ and the Apostles were not like our "Higher Critics." Moses and the Prophets again and again claim that God spoke to them and by them, and Christ and the Apostles repeatedly con-

firm the claim. David said: The Spirit of the Lord spake unto me, and his word was in my tongue. II. Sam. 23: 2. Christ says that David spake by the Holy Ghost. Mark 22: 36. He came to fulfill the law and the Prophets. Matt. 5: 17. All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Acts 24: 44. Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets. Luke 24: 27. O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Luke 24: 25. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, etc. Luke 16: 29-31. Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me. John 5: 46. Christ is the sure key and supreme testator of the Old Testament.

Paul says: God spake in time past by the Prophets. Heb. 1: 1. All Scripture is giving by inspiration of God. II. Tim. 3: 16. In Acts 24: 14 he says: Believing all things which are written in the law and in the Prophets

Peter says: Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. II. Pet. 1: 21.

The miraculous and virgin birth of Christ is a fundamental truth, found in prophecy and detailed in the Gospels, and no man can deny this miracle without removing the keystone of the Gospel.

Mark the significant fact that as the Holy Spirit foresaw the present attacks on the Old Testament, Christ and the Apostles quote and certify many of those events most frequently denied and ridiculed.

"The Rib Story." Paul says the man was created first and the woman was from the man. I. Tim. 2: 13; I. Cor. 11: 8.

"The Serpent Temptation." Paul says the serpent beguiled Eve. II. Cor. 11:3.

"The Sacrifice of Isaac." Paul certifies this in Heb. 11: 17.

"Balaam and the Ass." Peter says, the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the Prophet. II. Pet. 2: 16.

And now we come to those who dishonor the Holy Oracles of God and the Son of God, by calling Jonah a fictitious and a humorous book, as one has said: "Comparable to the Biglow Papers."

Christ declares that Jonah was a sign of his death and resurrection, and that Nineveh repented at his preaching. Matt. 12: 39-41 and 16: 4, also Luke 11: 30. Therefore, no man can deny the historic truth of that book without impeaching the knowledge or veracity of the Lord Jesus Christ; solemn and fearful fact!

Is it possible that these men, calling themselves Christians, can suppose in serious and thoughtful moments, that they are guided by the Spirit and doing the will of God?

Our momentous contention is, that Christianity itself must stand or fall with Moses and the Prophets, as certainly as with Christ and the Apostles.

CHAPTER III.

WAYMARKS AND REMARKS.

Some good brother may say: "Let us not stop to argue with these critics, but go right on preaching the gospel and saving souls.

We reply, that when these men have undermined the faith of the people, we cannot save souls. Their preaching saves no souls.

Some may not see it at first, but pointing out the mistakes of Moses is pointing the way to absolute infidelity and final perdition. There is no salvation but by the obedience of faith, near the cross and away from this destructive criticism.

The "New Evangelism" does not and cannot save souls. This counterfeit gospel does not convict of sin and lead to repentance and Christ, for pardon does. No "great revival" is possible in the presence of this false criticism.

The great enemy of souls may say: "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?"

Ethical, elocutionary and evolutionary evangelism is vain, be it never so proudly "up-to-date." Strong preachers are biblical preachers, with sermons that hold the Bible in solution. No painted scenery of art and man's device, can take the place of the crimson cross of Calvary. The Holy Spirit has greater power than cultured brains and silver tongues.

Progress in the wrong direction is like speed in a blind horse rushing to a catastrophe. The development of the "inherent forces of human nature" into a golden age, is man's theory of the ages, but creation, providence and redemption mark God's wondrous plan. We are not promised a scientific, social and man-made millennium. Jehovah is not the slave of evolution.

The Bible differs from all other books because God wrote it. Its divine authorship, established by many infallible proofs, ensures its truthfulness and estab-

lishes its authority. It is quick and powerful, a living organism, and the effort of profane hands to dissect it is death.

The Holy Spirit is given to guide us into all truth, and we are commanded to hold fast the form of sound words. II. Tim. 1: 13.

Divine truth is absolutely imperial. You may wrest or twist it, but you cannot make it adapt itself to your sinful wish or will. It is the bright and changeless searchlight of God Almighty. It is the complete analysis of the whole man. The "modern world" out of Christ, with all its culture, civilization and stupendous achievements, is as far from God as the barbaric states of antiquity.

The natural man is a natural failure. A man in doubt of such fundamental truth or in a "transition state," is never called of God to preach the Gospel. Rom. 14: 23.

Without sound doctrine we can neither have a true gospel of salvation nor a healthy spiritual life. These critics do not make the Bible a blessing. We prize, and God uses, reverent scholarship, but Luther feared that our secular universities would become "the gates of hell." Unsanctified learning is now playing the devil with some of our schools and churches. The Bible was written mainly for plain, unlettered men, to be understood by the spiritual faculty, rather than for great scholars and expert critics. It is a sealed book to the natural man. I. Cor. 2: 14. There are perils as well as advantages in freethought and the right of private judgment before God. "Liberal mathematics" will wreck a bank and "liberal theology" a soul. Seek true things more than new things.

John says: Whoso goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. II. John 9. We need the humility and simple faith of children. Luke 15: 17.

God confounds man's conceit by choosing for use five most contemptible things in man's eyes. I. Cor. 1: 27-29. A preacher sent from God is a specialist, to hear the Word at his mouth and transmit it to perishing men. How supremely egotistical and rash for him to debate with God.

How can these amiable, intelligent and perhaps devout men as theists, who wish the church no harm, satisfy their consciences while acting such a part? How dare they take Balak's gold and preach to please Balak? They should see that they are perverting the church from its historic faith and its divine mission. They despise and condemn civic treason, but do they not violate their allegiance to Christ and the Church? Some have returned from the mists of error and the pride of learning to the orthodox faith; let us pray earnestly that more may follow. They may claim that they do not injure the Bible, but they attack the very foundations of the citadel with masterly skill. If we could flash before their eyes the blessed hope and fearful menace of the Coming of the Lord, it might startle them.

We are commanded to contend earnestly for the faith, and what are we to think of a man who does not care enough about his faith to contend for it.

Rationalism, which is the attempt to overshadow the mind of God with the mind of man, has ruined the church of Germany, and it is now paralyzing the church of America. Feasting takes the place of fasting.

They cannot destroy the Bible, for it has the power of an endless life like the "Eternal Word," but they may destroy their own and others' souls. John tells us that we are guilty if we bid them God-speed, or even eat in fellowship with them. They have helped to bring in "an age of unrest," connected with the perilous, grevious and difficult times of Prophecy. II. Tim. 3: 1-8.

The decline of old time and influential confidence in the inspiration and authority of God's Word, is the radical cause of the general increase of worldliness in the Church and the fearful prevalence of general lawlessness, unrestrained vice and gigantic crime in the world. The fear of God and of hell has declined.

When Jehudi's penknife cuts in pieces the Oracles of God, it cuts loose the restraints of divine righteousness and human virtue. Faith is the first thing, the mother grace, and when this declines all the others decline and lawlessness reigns.

The truth and veracity of Moses and the Prophets, as well as that of Christ and the Apostles, is the doctrine of a standing or a falling Church.

CHAPTER IV.

CLOSING APPEAL.

God has some as true, wise and faithful Witnesses as ever lived; let me appeal to them.

But little good and no transformation can be effected unless men and women are clean vessels and possess courage and the genuine martyr spirit.

Our work is difficult, stubborn, odious work. Let

us steer clear alike of the fatal pessimism of barbarism, and the silly optimism of civilization. We must not deal out the malicious fault-finding of an enemy, but the faithful wounds of a friend. We must preach Christianity with humanity.

But tenderloin is not the stuff for these times. Cultivate moral stamina and be ready for either the plow or the altar. The unbelief of the age should be met by a living and an invincible faith, its overwhelming worldliness by still greater unworldliness, and its indifference by heaven-enkindled and quenchless zeal!

Skeptics and formalists may blame and despise you, but the "man with the Ink Horn" will mark you for honor in the coming crisis.

If, like some of the old prophets, you receive a solemn burden from God to denounce as well as renounce, you must have their invincible courage, utter self-sacrifice and mountain strength. Any coward can admire and praise Jesus Christ, but it takes a royal hero to follow Him. Do not look around to catch the smiles, or shun the frowns of the world. If the world is against you, you must be against the world, and if no friendly faces shine upon you, look heavenward and forward. It is not necessary for a Christian to defend his reputation, or keep his head on his shoulders. Paul kept the faith and lost his head, but God will give it back some day, gloriously crowned. A setting star may rise again, but a falling star never.

Be patient, and wage a civil war. Let no provocation of stupidity, mendacity or malice provoke you to copy the tableaux of Balaam and the ass. "And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked

me, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee." Num. 22: 29; II. Tim. 2: 24-26.

Let them exhaust their wits, but not your patience.

If you stand between the devil and the deep sea, your way out is perpendicular. Turn away, then, from all of earth's ambitions; accept the cross and grace of Jesus; be willing to be nothing and nobody; endure hardness, reproach and persecution cheerfully for Christ's sake, and make you mark on eternity. If a man suffers nothing for his religion, he may well fear that he has none to suffer for.

Stand on the Holy Bible like a rock on a rock.

Call the church to repentance with both tender and terrific tones, in view of her quickly coming Lord. Rev. 22: 12. We neither want the wild fire of Jehu nor the cold caution of Thomas, but the wisdom, zeal and self-sacrifice of Paul. Some one says, however, that a man now who does not sometimes get mad in these days, is a hypocrite or a fool. Surely patience and toleration should not degenerate into indifference and cowardice. Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion. Amos 6: 1.

The pulpit is a throne of blended grace and judgment; reign in it as a legate of the skies, a vicegerent of God. We are not to preach merely "what we think," as a result of reasoning, but what God says, and repeat it with divine authority. Do this and you carry the "Keys" of the Kingdom of Heaven.

As the old Prophets, Christ and the Apostles and the Reformers foretell: two great moral forces will contend in the conflict of ages, sometimes one dominating, sometimes the other, until Christ comes.

Our scaffold sways the future. "The morning com-

eth and also the night." Keep a sacred Bridal heart and spotless Bridal robes. Amid these stirring times and closing scenes never preach the Gospel "in cold blood," but "shake your heart out at them." Deliver the stored energy of the truth and Holy Ghost from your heart like thunder and lightning. We need not shout, wear plumes or flaunt banners yet, but it is supreme honor to live and be faithful amid these closing scenes. War makes heroes, and the combat deepens. Crowns are won in battle, and the last great battle is on. It is better now to be a faithful son of God than to be the son of a hundred kings. Hear the heaven-descending promise: ' Behold I come quickly," the star-crowned harbinger of day.

Point every eye to that grand impending event on which the age hinges , and which dazzles contemplation ! Heaven will not hold back our glorious Redeemer much longer. Put on a shining morning face and keep on the watch, as men of the girdle, the staff and the lamp, fired with the sacred passion of the second life and the age to come.

I am an Optimist, give me time, "a little while." Watch for—

"The King that comes in mercy,
The King that comes in might,
To terminate the evil,
And diadem the right."

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